

Woodland Management Plan

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1. Map of woodland



2. Introduction

This document is a woodland management plan for the woodlands on the Yorkley Court Estate which is under the stewardship of Yorkley Court Community Farm Ltd. The management plan is designed to improve the productive capacity and increase biodiversity within the wooded area.

The woodland has been observed for two years with little interference. These observations have been used to inform the management plan. During the implementation of the plan there will be an ongoing observation and review process, yearly work schedules will be informed by this process. and the plan altered to reflect further information as it arises.

This WMP feeds into a holistic plan for the wider community farm project and does not exist on its own or without effecting other activities on the farm or being effected by other projects. This WMP is guided by our shared principles outlines in our mission statement.

Associated projects are:

- Biochar stoves
- Working horses
- woodland crafts
- Fuel for communal heating and cooking
- Mushrooms
- Hedgerow plant propagation
- Agro-forestry

3. General observations and evaluation

There is a track that runs along the western side of the site, at times along the edge of the woodland.

There is a fork from this track in the southern end of the site which runs parallel through the woodland. There are two public footpath that both cross the site and pass through the woodland. There are several footpaths through the woodland that makes some parts more accessible than others. Another footpath runs along the eastern edge of the woodland in the adjoining forestry commission land. On the whole the woodland is slightly sloping to the south.

There is significant squirrel damage to trees throughout the site.

Compartment A

A1: This section of woodland runs along the western side of the vehicle access track onto the site. This wide strip is on a steep slope and borders the open fields beyond, it is made up of mostly hedgerow trees such as blackthorn, hawthorn, dog rose and gorse. Along the field boundary are some oak, ash and hazel. Trees here grow quite closely together. There has been some recent

coppicing works within this section.

A2: This section of scattered scrub is currently difficult to access due to extensive bramble coverage. There are a number of young oak trees. Again there is blackthorn and hawthorn, also some willow and a few hazel stools. There are high levels of squirrel damage to the trees in this section. There is a wide spacing between trees in this area and the ground becomes wetter towards the south.

A3: The area around the buildings and yard contains some of the largest willow trees on site. There is also some birch in this area. A lot of young ash seedlings are visible in this area and also some young oak. This area is very accessible. Trees are scattered, progressing to a closed canopy in the east. Towards the spring there stands some older trees including holly, ash and oak.

Compartment B

B1: There is mainly willow in this section. A lot of the willow has fallen or is standing deadwood. The canopy here is generally closed resulting in low growing ground cover plants. The ground here is quite wet. There are a few pockets of ash groves within this compartment.

B2: This area of scattered scrub features mostly young oak with some willow and again lots of hedgerow varieties including hawthorne and blackthorne. This area slopes slightly. There is quite a lot of space between trees here and is fairly accessible as it stands.

B3: Very similar to B1, to the west the trees open into a meadow/ clearing area.

4. Aims and management objectives

The aims of this woodland management plan are-

Ecological management. Increase biodiversity by leaving some areas wild while creating far greater ecological diversity by establishing a regime of coppice and pollard rotation.

Education. To offer education in sustainable woodland management and courses in woodland crafts to keep traditional skills alive. To be an intrinsically beautiful place for people to come and learn the value of nature.

Foraging. Responsible use of the 'Four Fs'; Fruit, Foliage, Fungi and Flowers, will be encouraged - assuming that none of them are protected specifically.

Timber Production. Small scale timber production will happen for crafts use. Some timber will also be used on site for building, maintaining dwellings, fencing etc.

Firewood. This will be what is left. Initially there will be large amounts of firewood as existing trees are brought into a coppice / pollard regime.

5. Management Prescription

5.1 Wildlife Area

Significant areas in the east of A3 and the south of B3 will see very little management works. Natural regeneration will be allowed to happen without interference. The public footpaths pass through and alongside A3 which will afford opportunities for the public to observe how woodland regenerates over time.

5.2 Coppice and Pollards with Standards

Compartments A1, B1, 2 and 3 will be managed as coppice and pollards over-stood with standards. Compartment B has been divided into 6 areas comprising 0.5 hectares each. A 7 year rotation will be established. Hazel will be coppiced, willow pollarded and some ash and oak managed as standards. Where ash and oaks have suffered extensive squirrel damaged they will also be kept as pollards.

After pollarding trees release a large number of new shoots, many of these shoots die during the first few years of regrowth as they shade each other out. A year after each compartment is cut, half of the year old willow wands will be cut to be used for basketry and other willow weaving. Having the willow pollarded provides regrowth at a height which suits cutting by hand

5.3 Timetable for Coppicing

	C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	C6	C7
Year 1	First cut						
Year 2	Harvest select willow shoots	First cut					
Year 3		Harvest select willow shoots	First cut				

Year 4			Harvest select willow shoots	First cut			
Year 5				Harvest select willow shoots	First cut		
Year 6					Harvest select willow shoots	First cut	
Year 7						Harvest select willow shoots	First cut
Year 8	Second cut						Harvest select willow shoots

5.4 Yield

During the first 7 years of rotation as existing trees in each compartment are brought into management regime the woodland will be providing some timber and a large amount of firewood.

On average 0.5 hectares of woodland will produce 1.5 tonnes of air dried wood a year. It is expected that significantly larger quantities will be harvested during the first seven years with yields to be somewhere in this region in following years.

5.5 Implementation

Coppicing and pollarding are traditional methods of tree management carried out from November to the end of February when the sap is at its lowest. This gives the tree a greater chance of stronger regrowth.

5.6 Pest Management

A program of squirrel shooting with air rifle will be introduced to alleviate the great damage that they have been causing to the trees on the site. Coppice stools will be sheltered by brash piles to

protect them from grazing during the occasional deer incursions. The regrowth on the pollarded trees is at a height beyond the reach of the deer.

5.7 Nursery and Planting

On site plant nursery enterprises have been established that propagate trees and shrubs. These enterprises will, when necessary, provide stock for planting within the woodland.